

REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to claims 1-26 on the basis of an informality.

Claims 5, 8, 10, 13 - 24 were rejected under 35 USC §112, first paragraph. The Examiner rejected claims 1-9, 15, 19-20, and 24 under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Kritzer (U.S. Patent No. 6,382,358). Claims 11-14, 16, 23, and 25-26 11 and 26 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kritzer (U.S. Patent No. 6,382,358) in view of Ringel et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,039,151). Additionally, the Examiner rejected claims 12-14 and 16 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kritzer (U.S. Patent No. 6,382,358) in view of Fitzroy (U.S. Patent No. 289,905). Claim 23 was rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kritzer (U.S. Patent No. 6,382,358) in view of Naegeli (U.S. Patent No. 4,531,614). Claim 25 was rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kritzer (U.S. Patent No. 6,382,358) in view of Green (U.S. Patent No. 5,967,443). Finally, Claims 17-18 and 22 were objected to for being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but the Examiner would allow them if they were rewritten.

U.S. patent No. 6,382,358 to Kritzer does not disclose the features of independent claim 1 of the present application. Although Kritzer discloses a locking unit pivotable and arranged in that way that the center of gravity of the locking unit is located off-center, the locking unit according to the Kritzer disclosure is only engaged by biasing with a spring (see, e.g., col. 3, lines 18-20, col. 6, line 6 and Figs. 1 and 4). A locking (active connection) by gravity in the locking unit as disclosed and claimed for the present invention is not disclosed in the Kritzer patent.

In contrast, the Kritzer patent discloses an acting by the force of the spring 51 against the movement of release bar 53. According to the Kritzer patent, the gravity of the pivotable pawl

47 acts against the locking direction of the spring force. A fail-safe mechanism 41 has nothing to do with the present invention.

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the claims in the present application, as they now stand, patentably distinguish over the references cited and applied by the Examiner and are, therefore, in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance is in order, and such favorable action and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

However, if after reviewing the above amendments and remarks, the Examiner has any questions or comments, he is cordially invited to contact the undersigned attorneys.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: November 28, 2005
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